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CIA-Linked Student Group Draws Crowds

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By ARTHUR EDSON

WASHINGTON (AP) — This capital

city has hundreds of national and international organizations, and one of the more inconspicuous has been the National Student Association.

It's tucked away on a side street at 2115 S. St., maybe a mile from the White House, in a four-story stone building that once was a residence. You could pass it a hundred times and never notice what was there.

Until Tuesday its officers and its employees fretted — at least publicly — only about such things as how to set up courses so that students can learn how to evaluate college teachers and where the draft laws should be amended and why smoking marijuana isn't legal and why more research isn't done on LSD and other psychedelic drugs.

"You know, the short of thing

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all students are interested in," one officer said Wednesday.

The inside of the association's front door serves as its bulletin board and a couple of notices there point up how placid life had been.

One reported that a tape recorder and two microphones are missing. "They are NSA equipment and we need them to do some recordings at press conferences," it said.

The other was an airmail postal card from someone who apparently has been at a student film festival in Amsterdam. "Hello student leaders," it began, and it ended with this loyal observation: "Please tell the students of the United States of America that no matter what the judges say, their films are still the best. Regards, Art."

Money From CIA

Then Tuesday came and the word was out that for 10 years the students have been getting part of their funds from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Wednesday 2115 S St. resembled a bus station in a college town the day Christmas vacation begins.

Reporters, students, ex-students, secretaries all milled about while a desperate young lady, Mary Nelle Gage, alternately answered the constantly ringing phone and tried to shoo everybody out. "You'll learn nothing here," she said. "there will be no statement of any kind."

Super Sleuths

Only one impression remained constant: If the CIA hoped to turn some of these young people into super sleuths they certainly hit on some unlikely looking specimens.

Take Bernie Grofman of the University of Chicago. He is a member of the governing body

meeting Wednesday and Thursday to discuss the association's future. He's a small, intense, likeable young man with unruly hair and shoes covered with salt from wading around the snowy streets of Chicago.

"I haven't had time to shine them," Grofman said.

Grofman was explaining that each summer around a thousand students meet and pick a president and two vice presidents — who become paid officials and drop out of school — and 10 members of a governing board. These are chosen by regions, three from the midwest, three from the east, two from the south and two from the west.

Normally the board meets four times a year; this was an extra, emergency session.

Economics Student

Or take Julius Lokin, an immaculate economics major from Brooklyn College's graduate school, who has dropped out temporarily to work as a field man.

Lokin sadly surveyed the room and said he wished the reporters would pay some heed to the good the association does, such as helping student governing bodies draw up constitutions or sharing ideas on how best to petition for bigger parking lots.

A pragmatic reporter cut in with a question: "Where do you guys park around here? I had to park illegally."

"Sometimes we do, too," Lokin said, "and the CIA doesn't take care of the parking tickets either."

Well, finally the members of the governing board were herded together and sent off to a meeting at a nearby inn to discuss whatever it is that ex-sleuths talk about.

But the phone kept ringing and reporters kept coming in and Mary Nelle Gage kept saying: "There's no one here, and I'd sort of appreciate it if you would all leave."

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